



TOWN OF BERWYN HEIGHTS

Prince George's County, Maryland

Incorporated in 1896 ~ Sixth Oldest Municipality in PG County

WORKSESSION MINUTES AUGUST 24, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Chris Rasmussen, Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Der and Maria Robles. CM Anthony Schreiber had resigned. Also present was Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles and Clerk Kerstin Harper.

1. MAYOR

Agenda: A discussion of the Council vacancy resulting from CM Schreiber's resignation was added, as well as an Executive session if warranted. Revision of Ordinance 109 - Elections was moved to the Administration Department's agenda.

Announcements: MPT Rasmussen met with CM Robles to discuss the transfer of the Code Compliance Department. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy announced that CM Schreiber had resigned and read the letter of resignation.

Calendar: A premiere of the FBI marketing video will take place on August 30, 12 noon. A date for a joint meeting of the Greenbelt and Berwyn Heights Town Council to discuss the Greenbelt Road streetscape should be set for the end of September. Several code appeals are scheduled for the September 8 worksession. The Berwyn Heights Girls Club Harvest Fest will take place on October 3. Preparations are underway. The MML fall conference will take place October 26-28. CM Robles plans to attend the next Four Cities Coalition meeting will be held in Greenbelt on October 22.

The Council selected Monday, November 30 as the first choice for the Town's legislative dinner, and Tuesday, December 1 as the second choice. Clerk Harper contacted the delegates to see if they are available on these dates.

Minutes: On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Robles, the August 10 worksession minutes were approved 4 to 0.

Department reports: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy attended a presentation by County Councilmember Danielle Glaros on the Master Plan Support Project, which sets priorities for the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) capital improvement plan based on an evaluation of all school buildings with regard to the critical areas of condition and function. Berwyn Heights Elementary School is slated for improvements in the 1st round. Town residents with an interest in schools are encouraged to follow this effort. Chief Antolik has requested a vacant properties list so he can have his officers check on them.

MPT Rasmussen reported that he will meet with TA Cowles about transitioning from the Code to the Administration Department. CM Robles said she has met with Supervisor Glass to get an understanding of how the Code Department is run and hopes to do a ride-along with one of the code officers. She will also meet with TA Cowles this week for a new Councilmember orientation and hopes to get an overview of recent changes in the Town. CM Dennison said that the Town organization will not meet during August but will resume activities in September.

Citizen comments: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy received a comment on the curbs and gutters that are being repaired. CM Robles received a comment about a neighbor's house that is falling down. Code Supervisor Glass is looking into it as the resident is reluctant to report it.

Council vacancy (added item): Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said that the Council must appoint a new Councilmember to replace CM Schreiber within 45 days, per the Charter; that is, by October 5, 2015. The only Town Meeting (where a new councilmember could be sworn in) before that date will be held on September 9. Following former Mayor Calvo's resignation in June, four Town residents applied to fill the vacancy. She asked whether Councilmembers preferred to start a new search approach or applicants from the previous search to find a candidate. There is precedence to fill a Town Council vacancy in this manner.

CM Robles, who was not a member of the Council when the interviews of the applicants were conducted, said it would be simpler to offer the new vacant seat to one of the previous candidates, and she feels comfortable with it. There were no objections to proceeding in this manner. It was agreed to make a selection from the previous candidate pool during an executive session after reviewing the applications and briefing CM Robles on the interviews that took place. If the candidate announcement and swearing-in would take place at the September Town meeting.

Nothing was discussed under 2. Parks and Recreation, 3. Public Safety, and 4. Public Works.

5. ADMINISTRATION

Town Treasurer's position: TA Cowles presented a revised job description and recruitment announcement for the Town Treasurer position. The job description consolidates redundant information, and reorganizes the Treasurer's duties based on their importance. The recruitment announcement summarizes the Treasurer's responsibilities and spells out the skills and education requirements, which include a Bachelor's degree in finance, accounting or related field and five years of experience, preferably in a public sector organization. Based on research of job announcements of comparable finance positions in this area, the salary offer would be up to \$67,000.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy suggested to revise the job announcement to allow for other than Quickbooks accounting software knowledge. She also asked that the salary offer be in a range of \$63,000 - \$68,000. MPT Rasmussen said that another, less expensive option would have been to down-grade the position to an accounts payable officer and create a hybrid clerk-treasurer position, while outsourcing the finance officer type responsibilities. He asked why TA Cowles chose to go the other way.

TA Cowles replied that the Treasurer position is a one-person finance department, who deals with all finance-related activities in the Town government, while she acts as a backup to the front desk. From a management perspective, it is easier to work with one person who performs a multitude of financial tasks than multiple time staff performing specialized financial duties. One missing piece in the current set-up is someone to help her put together the budget, analyze trends and look for new sources of revenue, including grants. The business licensing function could be streamlined with the help of the new code software and the freed-up part-time staff used to assist the treasurer.

The Council approved the posting of the job announcement. TA Cowles and MPT Rasmussen will discuss how the candidate might be selected and will make recommendations to the Council.

At 8:00 p.m., the Council took a 5 minute break.

Performance evaluations: TA Cowles gave an update on the status of the performance evaluations. All staff evaluations have been completed and reviews of evaluations by the councilmember/ department heads are scheduled to take place within the next week. Interviews with staff about their evaluations are expected to occur in late September. Evaluations of the department directors are in progress, with former CM Schreiber reviewing the Public Works Director, former Mayor Der and Mayor Kulpa-Eddy both reviewing the Police Chief, and TA Cowles and MPT Rasmussen reviewing the Code Compliance Supervisor. Merit increases will be discussed in October to become effective in the first pay period in November.

IT vendors: TA Cowles said that the Town hired its current IT vendors some 12 years ago when it switched to Linux operating systems on its computers. However, now most of the Town's computers run on the Windows operating system, which is not the strong suit of the current vendor. She has done research and talked to other municipalities about their technical support to identify three vendors that would be able to provide better service. All of them are familiar with I-Net intergovernmental internet service provider that serves most municipalities in Prince George's County. The vendors have different pricing structures, but all provide more service for approximately the same price the Town currently pays for IT support.

TA Cowles recommended BAIS2, which is the IT vendor for Riverdale Park and University Park. They, charge \$45 per user per month and provide unlimited help and support. The contract can be renewed annually at cost of \$10,800. The contract would cover the Town offices, police station and Public Works Department as well as the Senior Center. Councilmember and Senior Center workstations would not count as users, since they don't experience full daily usage. MPT Rasmussen moved CM Dennison seconded to select BAIS2 as the prospective vendor. The motion passed 4 to 0.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Chris Rasmussen, Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Der and Maria Robles. CM Anthony Schreiber had resigned. Also present was Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles and Clerk Kerstin Harper. A video will take place on August 30, 12 noon. A date for a joint meeting of the Greenbelt and Berwyn Heights Town Councils to discuss the Greenbelt Road streetscape should be set for the month of September. Several code appeals are scheduled for the September 8 worksession. The Boys & Girls Club Harvest Fest will take place on October 3. Preparation is underway. The MML fall conference will take place October 26-28. CM Robles plans to attend. The next Four Cities Coalition meeting will be held in Greenbelt on October 22.

Ordinance 109 - Elections revision: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said tonight she hopes to complete the review of the remainder of the amended Election Ordinance. Harper said that this draft incorporates the changes made by the Council at the last worksession, as well as additional, mostly grammatical and typographical changes by Mayor Kulpa-Eddy and TA Cowles.

The Council reviewed the Ordinance and made the following changes:

Section 4 - Voter Registration: Subsection B on the Town's supplemental registration should include a registration period for the last Monday in March between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to conform with the Town Charter.

Section 5 - Appointment and Duties of the Board of Election Supervisors: The definition of the Board of Election Supervisors should explain that it is the same as the "Board of Supervisors of Elections," the term used in the Town Charter.

Section 6 - Preparing for Elections: A definition for Town Clerk should be added to Section 3 to clarify that employees other than the Town Clerk can be designated to perform the same election-related functions. This will eliminate the need to repeat the phrase "or other designated employee" throughout the Ordinance.

Section 6 A - Election Schedule: A definition for public outreach should be added to Section 3 to clarify that outreach is not limited to the Town Bulletin and can include newspapers of general circulation, websites and other electronic forms of communication.

Section 6 C - Board of Election Supervisors: The term election judges should be replaced by members of the Board of Election Supervisors to avoid conflict with the Town Charter, which states that the Board consists of 3 election judges and 2 clerks.

Section 6 E - Campaign Material: It should be clarified that campaign signs of Town Council candidates may not be posted in the Town right-of-way except on election day. Clarification regarding the extent of the Town right-of-way on properties may be needed.

Section 6 F - Write-in candidates: The Council debated which privileges the Ordinance should grant to a write-in candidate. It was tentatively agreed that candidates who submit their forms after the filing deadline are entitled to have their names posted in the polling station but not on the sample ballot or near the voting booth. Write-in candidates should not be entitled to have their biographies published in the Town Bulletin but are free to place a paid advertisement. Write-in candidates may participate in Candidates' Night, provided their forms were filed no later than one week prior to the event.

Section 6 I - Notice of Election: The posting of an election notice in at least 3 public places in the Town was added to this sub-section, to conform with the Town Charter.

Section 7 - Election Day: The opening hours of the polling station from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on election day were added.

Section 7 A - Preparing the Polling Station: The arrival time of election judges at the polling station was removed. The distance of the no electioneering zone from the polling entrance should be checked to ensure it is consistent with State law.

Section 7 C - Vote Tallying: Sub-section 7 C - Tallying Using Voting Machines should include a section on how provisional votes are handled. In Sub-section Tallying Using Paper Ballots references to calling for ballots to be organized and counted in stacks of 50 should be deleted. The provision on announcing councilmembers-elect should become its own Sub-section D, as it applies to voting both by machine and by paper ballot. The same provision should also state that the second-highest vote-getter will be declared Mayor Pro Tem. A definition for spoiled ballot mentioned here should be added in Section 3 -Definitions. The signing and sealing of the Statement of Election Results should not be included among the numbered items listed on the Statement.

Clerk Harper was asked to add the changes made tonight into a new draft that shows all changes made to date in the old Ordinance, using underlining and strikethroughs. The Council will review that version at the next worksession before introducing it at the September 9 Town meeting.

Nothing was discussed under **6. Code Compliance.**

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION (9:18 P.M. - 9:29 P.M.)

On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Robles, the Council went into executive session to discuss the selection of new councilmember. With motion discussed, CM Dennison moved and CM Robles seconded to end the executive session.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*

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